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THE LOVER ON THE SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MAGGIE BELL."

The night is stormy and dark,
And my lover is on the sea—
To the storm-winds let me hark,
And see what they say to me.

How wildly around the house
They murmur and moan to-night!
Is it strange such a wild carouse
Should cause a maiden affright?

They rattle the window-shutter;
And madly against the pane,
And on the roof and gutter,
They drive the pattering rain.

They thunder at window and door,
At scuttle and gable and thatch—
Till I hear a step on the floor,
And the click of a falling latch.

How tightly my sister's arm
Around me, in sleep, is thrown;
She hears not this wild alarm,
Or hears it in dreams alone.

She pillows her girlish head
Close, close to my aching breast,
And never can know the dread
Which is stealing away its rest.

She has no lover at sea,
To awaken her maiden fears,
Till her heart has grown to be,
Nightly, a heart of tears.

To her the storms may blow;
As long as the hearth is warm,
Her cheek will not lose its glow—
The storm is *only a storm*.

The night is stormy and dark,
And my lover is on the sea;
To the storm-winds let me hark,
And see what they say to me.

They tell of a Summer-day,
Of a clear and cloudless sky,
When along the sandy bay
We walked—my lover and I;

Of a gallant ship in the stream,
Of a boat beside the shore,
Of the fading flash and gleam
Of the fast-receding oar;

Of a figure upon the deck,
Another upon the strand;
Of the parting ship—a speck;
Of a fading cloud—the land.

They tell of a bed of pain,
And many a weary night,
When the fevered pulse and brain
Have watched and longed for light.

And of the blessed relief
Which came to the long despair—
For a maiden's earliest grief
Is a fearful thing to bear.

The night is stormy and dark,
And my lover is on the sea;
To the storm-winds let me hark,
And see what they say to me.

They tell of the frozen zone,
Where the icebergs plunge and dip,
By the Arctic winds o'erthrown,
Where speeds that gallant ship;

Of the "field," with its icy glare,
Where drifts the falling snow;
Of the chill and cutting air,
And of the fearful "floe;"

Of "hummock," and "berg," and "drift"—
Full enough to blanch the lip,
To tell how they grind and lift
That helpless and lonely ship:



Of days without any night,
And nights without any day;
Of famine, and sickness, and blight,
When the prayerless man would pray;

Of wretchedness, sorrow, and cold—
No sound save the panting breath—
The young face of yesterday, old,
Or smoothed by the hand of death.

O God! let me close my ears
To these fearful words, I pray;
Sure these are but maiden fears,
And not what the storm-winds say.

Cling closer, my sister dear,
The night is dreary and chill;
But we have no cause for fear,
If we have no cause for ill.

The night is stormy and dark,
And my lover is on the sea;
To the storm-winds let me hark,
And see what they say to me.

They will not speak as before;
Their voices are dying away,
Or lost in the wild uproar—
I cannot tell what they say.

Again let me strain my ear—
Perchance they are whispering low
A tale I shall shudder to hear,
A story 'twere death to know.

List! softly again they speak,
Through tempest and driving rain;
Why paleth the blood in my cheek
To hear the story again?

They tell of the lonely bark,
Pursuing her perilous way—
Hark—hark to the storm-winds, hark!
What is it they will not say?